



Sprinkler Requirements for Accessory Dwelling Units

TECHNICAL BULLETIN
RESD-3-4

City of San Diego
Development Services Department

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The purpose of this Technical Bulletin is to provide guidance in the requirements for sprinkler protection for accessory dwelling units when the primary residence is not sprinkler protected. For additional information regarding accessory dwelling units, see [Information Bulletin 400](#).

I. GENERAL

All new residential units require sprinkler protection per the 2019 California Building Standard Codes, however 2016 California Senate Bill 1069 exempts accessory dwelling units (ADUs) compliant with this Senate Bill from sprinkler protection when the primary dwelling unit is not sprinkler protected. Senate Bill 1069 does require the design to meet all health and safety requirements of the building standards.

II. DETACHED ADUS

Detached ADUs only require sprinkler protection when the primary dwelling unit is sprinkler protected. For duplexes and multiple dwelling unit (MDU) building sites adding an ADU, the primary dwelling unit is considered the entire duplex or the MDU building.

III. ATTACHED ADUS

Attached ADUs always require sprinkler protection when the primary dwelling unit is sprinkler protected.

The following attached ADU designs do not require sprinkler protection when the primary dwelling unit is not sprinkler protected:

- A. ADU attached to a single family home.
- B. ADU attached to a duplex (two-family dwelling) created by converting existing, permitted space. Although this project is a change of occupancy from a Group R-3 to a Group R-2, California Existing Building Code (CEBC), Section 506.1 allows for a change of occupancy without compliance with all of the requirements of the code for the new occupancy when the new use is less hazardous.
- C. ADU attached to an MDU created by converting the existing permitted space. As there is no change in occupancy and no increase in fire area, sprinklers are not required.

Documents referenced in this Technical Bulletin

- California Existing Building Code ([CEBC](#))
- California Fire Code ([CFC](#))
- [Information Bulletin 400](#), Accessory Dwelling Units and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units